MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

STUDENT ID NO

MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

FINAL EXAMINATION

TRIMESTER 3, 2021/2022

BLD 3104 – LEADERSHIP

(All sections / Groups)

12 AUGUST 2022
09.00 a.m – 11.00 a.m
(2 Hours)

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. This question paper consists of 4 pages (including cover page) with 4 questions only.

2. Attempt **ALL** questions. All questions carry equal marks and the distribution of marks for each question is given.

3. Please write all your answers in the Answer Booklet provided.

Question 1

Read the case below carefully, then answer the questions.

Ready Foods Company Ready Foods is a regional packaged food company that makes and sells food products in supermarkets. The company's most popular brands have traditionally been nonperishable foods that are easy to prepare, often with little regard for nutritional value. For the last 20 years, these brands have made the company highly profitable, and its employees have become accustomed to big paychecks and generous benefits, including a three-week annual paid holiday, a well-funded retirement program, and college tuition reimbursement for children of employees. However, in recent years, company sales and profits have declined because consumer preferences have shifted to favor fresher, healthier foods not currently provided by the company. Bruce Berry has been the CEO of the company for five years, and the shift in customer preferences to healthier options has been his major management problem.

Over the past few years Bruce has made incremental changes to the company's products, but none of these changes have reduced the decline in sales and profits. He knew that for the company to survive, it would be necessary in the coming year to make more significant changes in the company's products and marketing strategy. After considerable marketing research, Bruce determined that the company needed to expand its offerings and invest in a program to develop and offer fresh, organic foods to support the healthier lifestyle of many potential customers. However, this program would require funds that would not be available as the company's profits continued to decline. Bruce did not like the idea of employee layoffs as a means of securing the necessary funds, and he decided instead to cut some employee benefits that seemed excessive and unnecessary for his type of company. He assumed that most employees would be willing to lose these benefits to enable the company to pay for the new fresh foods program without having to lay off any employees.

However, he did not try to explain the need for his decision or seek the suggestions and support of employees. Bruce believed that he had the responsibility and authority to make this type of decision, and that it was why he was paid more than most CEOs of similar companies. When the changes were announced, many employees were very upset that their benefits were being cut. Most employees believed the fresh foods program was unnecessary. They saw it as an overreaction to a temporary change in customer preferences, and they believed company sales and profits would recover to the levels achieved for many years without such a program.

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Many employees believed the cut in benefits was excessive and felt like the company did not value their years of service. This resentment caused some employees to seek employment elsewhere, and others found ways to delay the development and implementation of the fresh foods program. It took months to find qualified replacements for the employees who left and to regain employee trust. Meanwhile, the lack of healthier options continued to hurt company performance.

Reference: Gullifor, D., & Gardner, W. (2020). Case: Ready Foods Company. Pearson.

a. Why did Bruce fail to successfully implement the changes? (10 marks)

b. What could Bruce have done differently to plan and implement the new program more successfully? (15 marks)

Question 2

You have recently been appointed as the supervisor of a frontline team.
Describe **FIVE (5)** leadership skills that you will use and the actions you will take to maintain the motivation and effectiveness of the team. (25 marks)

Question 3

a. Discuss with example, the **FOUR (4)** roles of a follower. (8 marks)
b. Why do you think so little emphasis is given to followership compared to leadership in organizations? (7 marks)
c. As a leader, what would you want most from followers? (10 marks)

Question 4

Read the passage below carefully, then answer the questions.

CEO Tony Bussard apparently wanted to relinquish none of the power when he agreed with board members of Alvon Biometrics to maintain control over the financial and administrative side of the company while naming a COO to oversee day-to-day operations. Juan Carlos De la Vega was hired as COO for the company. De la Vega came to Alvon from a smaller rival company and was initially excited about his new position and the future of Alvon. But De la Vega's exciting new position came with its own set of frustrations as he tried to plunge into the rapidly changing technology while simultaneously fitting into the organization and tip-toeing around Tony Bussard's ego.

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One year into the job, De la Vega was still wondering what was expected of him. De la Vega's earnest efforts to get guidance about his responsibilities seemed to be brushed aside by the CEO. The confusion about De la Vega's role also filtered down the ranks. Employees, expecting initiative from De la Vega, remained uncertain about his range of responsibilities. Even one year later, employees were reluctant to take a chance on angering Bussard by shifting their attention and allegiance to De la Vega. De la Vega knew it was time for clarity.

Reference: Daft, R. L. (2014). The leadership experience. Cengage Learning.

a. If you were De la Vega, what would you do at this point? Why do you think De la Vega has waited too long to make a substantial change in his relationship with Bussard? (10 marks)

b. Explain the tactics that might help improve De la Vega's relationship with Bussard? (10 marks)

c. If you were in De la Vega's position, what would you have done from the beginning? Be specific about your actions and timing. (5 marks)

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